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Massasoit's Town

Sowams in Pokanoket

ITS HISTORY LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS

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The History of Warren, R. I. in the War of the Revolution

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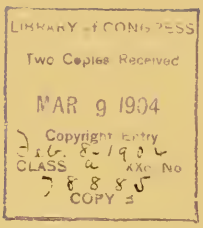

"Warren! where first beside the cradled nation,
The old chief stood, we love thy storied past,
'Sowams is pleasant for a habitation'—
'Twas thy first history—may it be thy last."

—Hezekiah Butterworth.

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Massasoit's Town
Sowams in Pokanoket

A PECULIAR interest centres about everything pertaining to the great Wampanoag sachem Massasoit. Massasoit has always, and justly, been regarded as one of the most remarkable of that group of illustrious aboriginal chieftains with whom the early white settlers of New England were associated. But while the student of history is familiar with the story of the Indian king's life-long allegiance to our forefathers, while he admires in the untutored savage virtues few Christian monarchs have possessed, he knows comparatively little of the environments that helped to mould a character of so unique a stamp. The ancient chroniclers often allude to Massasoit's place of residence, and the questions that naturally present themselves are: Where was this place? Why did Massasoit select it for his abode? What is its history? To answer these questions, in part at least, is the object of this sketch.

At the period when the Mayflower came to anchor in Plymouth harbor, Massasoit exercised dominion over nearly all the south-eastern part of Massachusetts from Cape Cod to Narragansett Bay. The south-western section of his kingdom was known as Pokanoket, Sowams, or Sowamsett. It included what now comprises the towns of Bristol, Warren, Barrington, and East Providence in Rhode Island, with portions of Seekonk, Swansea, and Rehoboth in Massachusetts. Though its area was only about 500 square miles Pokanoket, owing to its many natural advantages, was more

densely populated than any other part of the Wampanoag country. Its principal settlement was the village of Sowams, where Massasoit maintained his headquarters, and where, without doubt, the greater portion of his life was passed.

For many years the exact location of this village was a disputed point, authorities variously fixing it at Bristol, Barrington, and Warren. The late Gen. Guy M. Fessenden was the first to demonstrate, conclusively, that Sowams occupied the site of the last mentioned place. The results of his careful and painstaking investigation of the claims of the three towns may be found in the short but valuable historical sketch of Warren published by General Fessenden in 1845.*

One familiar with the Pokanoket region readily perceives why Massasoit placed his capital where he did. Warren is situated midway between Barrington and Bristol, on an arm of Narragansett Bay, and is bounded on the north and east by the State of Massachusetts. A glance at the map of Rhode Island will show the reader that, at Warren, which is farther inland than either of its sister towns, the Wampanoags were, in a great measure, protected from the danger of sudden attack by their enemies, the Narragansetts who dwelt upon the opposite shore of the bay,† and that, in case of hostile invasion, they were easily able to retire to less exposed portions of their domains.

The Indians were always particular to locate their permanent villages in the vicinity of springs of running water. Warren abounds in such springs. Its soil is generally fertile and its climate agreeable and healthy, as, owing to its somewhat inland position, it escapes the full rigor of the fierce

*See also, "Sowams, the Home of Massasoit: Where Was It?" by Virginia Baker, N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register, July, 1899.

†The Narragansetts occupied what is now Washington County, Rhode Island

winds, that, during the winter months, sweep the unsheltered shores of Bristol. In the days when the Wampanoags inhabited its territory, it was well timbered, and grapes, cherries, huckleberries, and other wild fruits grew abundantly in field and swamp. Its rivers teemed with fish of many varieties, and also yielded a plentiful supply of lobsters, crabs, oysters, clams, quahaugs, and mussels. Flocks of wild fowl haunted its marshes; deer and smaller game frequented its woods. Even in those seasons when food became generally scarce, the dwellers at Sowams probably suffered little from hunger in comparison with the inhabitants of many sections of New England less favored by nature.

At Sowams, too, every facility for the manufacture of the shell beads used as currency by the aborigines was to be found. Any one who chose might become a *natouwompitea*, or coiner, and literally, "make as much money," as he wished. From the rocks at hand the savage artificer shaped the rude implements which his craft demanded. The waters gave him freely the periwinkle and the quahaug. From the former he cut the *wampum* * or white beads. Of the "eye," or dark portion of the latter, he fashioned the more aluable black beads called *suckauhock*. These beads were made into necklaces, scarfs, belts, girdles, bracelets, caps and other articles of dress and ornament "curiously strung," says Roger Williams, "into many forms and figures, their black and white finely mixed together." Not infrequently a savage arrayed in gala attire carried upon this person his entire stock of ready money. Governor Bradford states that the Narragansetts and Pequots grew "rich and potent" by the manufacture of wampum and, presumably, wealth contributed in no small degree towards establishing the prestige of the Wampanoags.

* This name, although originally applied only to the white beads, came, in time, to signify both white and black.

This tribe, properly speaking, was a confederation of clans each clan having its own headman who was, however, subservient to a chief sachem. The Wampanoags, or Pokanokets as they were also called, were originally a populous and powerful people and it is said that, at one period, their chief was able to rally around him no less than 3,000 warriors. The father of Massasoit, according to the testimony of his illustrious son,* waged war successfully against the Narragansetts; and Annawon, King Philip's great captain, boasted to his captor, Church, of the "mighty success he had formerly in wars against many nations of Indians, when he served Asuhmequin, Philip's father." About three years before the settlement of Plymouth, however, a terrible plague devastated the country of the Wampanoags and greatly diminished their numbers. Governor Bradford, alluding to this pestilence, states that "thousands of them dyed, they not being able to burie one another," and that "their sculs and bones were found in many places lying still above ground, where their houses and dwellings had been; a very sad specktacle to behould." The Narragansetts who were so fortunate as to escape the plague, took advantage of the weakness of their ancient foes, wrested from them one of the fairest portions of their domain the island of Aquidneck, (Rhode Island) and compelled Massasoit to subject "himself and his lands," to their great sachem Canonicus. In 1620, the Pokanoket chieftain could summon to his aid only about 300 fighting men, sixty of whom were his immediate followers. Yet Massasoit, despite his weakness, contrived to maintain his supremacy over the petty sachems of the various clans of the Wampanoag confederacy. The sagamores of the Islands of Nantucket and Nope or Capawack (Martha's Vineyard), of Pocasset, (Tiverton), Saconet

* See Deposition of Roger Williams.

(Little Compton), Namasket (Middleborough), Nobsquasset (Yarmouth), Monamoit (Chatham), Nauset (Eastham), Patuxet (Plymouth), and other places, together with the headmen of some of the Nipmuc nation, were tributary to him. Undoubtedly some of these chiefs were allied to Massasoit by ties of consanguinity or mutual interests; others, probably, rendered homage as conquered to conqueror.

Like the Narragansetts, the Wampanoags were considerably advanced in civilization. They built permanent villages, and cultivated corn, beans, pumpkins, and squashes. They manufactured cooking utensils of stone and clay,* and rude implements for domestic and war-like purposes from shells, stone, and bone. They prepared the greater part of their food by the aid of fire and their cookery was, by no means, unpalatable. The famed Rhode Island Johnny cake and still more famous Rhode Island clam bake each claim an Indian origin. They understood how to dress birch and chestnut bark which they used for covering their wigwams, and they constructed canoes by hollowing out the trunks of large trees. Of rushes and grasses they wove mats and baskets, and they fashioned moccasins, leggings, and other articles of apparel from the skins of wild beasts. They were very accurate in their observations of the weather, and spent much time in studying the heavens, being familiar with the motions of the stars, and having names for many of the constellations. In common with the other native tribes of North America, they worshipped various gods, peopling earth, air, sky, and sea with deities; yet they acknowledged one supreme being, and believed in the immortality of the soul.

It is obvious that Massasoit possessed mental endowments of no mean order, and it is equally obvious that his environ-

* Undoubtedly much of the clay used in Pokanoket was procured at Barrington and North Swansea.

ments were precisely those best calculated to develop a character naturally strong. He dwelt in a land which, if not literally flowing with milk and honey, abounded with everything needful to supply the simple wants of savage life, and thus he escaped those demoralizing influences which attend the struggle for mere existence. The proximity of a powerful enemy rendered him, cautious, alert, and vigilant. His position as the chief of a considerable confederacy invested him with dignity, and called into activity all those statesman-like qualities for which he was so justly famed. Winslow describes him as "grave of countenance, spare of speech," and this description tallies exactly with our ideal of the man. General Fessenden remarks: "This chief has never had full justice done to his character." Certainly it was no ordinary man who, conquered himself, still retained the respect and allegiance of several clans, differing in thought, mode of life, and interests. It was no ordinary man who, undaunted by misfortune, endured the yoke patiently till the opportunity to throw it off presented itself, and then quietly taking advantage of the auspicious moment accomplished the liberation of himself and his people from a servitude more bitter than death itself.

Massasoit was familiar with the appearance of white men before the arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth. In 1619, Captain Thomas Dermer, an Englishman, visited the Massachusetts coast and held an interview at Namasket with "two kings" of Pokanoket, undoubtedly Massasoit and his brother Quadequina. The English were regarded with suspicion and dislike by some of the tribes of the Wampanoag confederacy, owing to the fact that a certain unscrupulous trader * had kidnapped some of the natives and sold them into slavery

* Captain Thomas Hunt. He sold the Indians, Winslow tells us, for £20 apiece "like a wretched man that cares not what mischief he doth for his profit."

in Spain. Had the English attempted a settlement at Plymouth when the Pokanokets were at the zenith of their power, they would, probably, have been either exterminated or driven from the country. But, in 1620, Massasoit, whose fortunes were at the ebb, stood ready to extend the right-hand of fellowship to the pale-faced strangers, in whom he perceived the possible deliverers of his nation. The treaty with the Pilgrims into which he entered at Plymouth in March, 1621, was the bold stroke of a wise statesman and an experienced politician. The article in the treaty which stipulated that the English should aid him if "any did unjustly war against him" makes his position plain. "We cannot yet conceive but that he is willing to have peace with us," writes Winslow, alluding to this treaty. "And especially because he hath a potent adversary, the Narrowhigansets that are at war with him; against whom, he thinks, we may be some strength to him; for our pieces are terrible unto them." Subsequent events proved that Massasoit's policy was not at fault for, with the assistance of his white allies, he was finally enabled to throw off the galling yoke of Canonicus, and to restore the Wampanoags to their old-time position of independence and power.

In July, 1621, Governor William Bradford decided to send a deputation to Pokanoket, to "discover the country," to "continue the league of peace and friendship" which had been entered into a few months previous at Plymouth, and to procure corn for planting. Provided with gifts, a horseman's laced coat of red cotton and a chain, Edward Winslow and Stephen Hopkins set out from Plymouth on Monday, July 2d, having for a guide Tisquantum, or Squanto, the friendly Indian whose name appears so conspicuously in the early annals of Plymouth. The trail followed led the travellers through Titicut in the north-west part of Middleborough, where they spent the night, to Taunton, thence to Mattapoiset

(South Swansea) and from there to Kickemuit in the easterly part of Warren. Undoubtedly the Kickemuit River was crossed at a wading-place, often alluded to in the early records of Warren, which was at a point a little north of the present Child Street bridge. From Kickemuit they continued on to Sowams in the western part of the town on the shores of the Warren River, then known as the Sowams River. There seems little reason to doubt that, in going from Kickemuit to Sowams, they followed a winding trail leading along what now constitutes the Kickemuit Road and Market Street in Warren, as, in 1621, the westerly portion of Child Street* was a thick swamp. This visit of Winslow and Hopkins was the second paid by white men to Rhode Island, the first visit having been made by Verazzano and his companions nearly a century before.

Winslow's party arrived at Sowams on the afternoon of July 4th, but Massasoit proved to be absent from home. Messengers were immediately dispatched after him, and he shortly appeared being greeted by a discharge of his white visitors' guns. He welcomed the Englishmen cordially and invited them into his wigwam, where they delivered a lengthy message from Governor Bradford and presented the gifts they had brought with them. The sachem at once donned the coat and hung the chain about his neck. "He was not a little proud," says Winslow, "to behold himself; and his men also to see their king so bravely attired."

In answer to the Governor's message Massasoit made a long speech in which he mentioned some thirty different places over which he exercised jurisdiction, and promised that his people should bring their skins to the English. At the close of the speech he offered his guests tobacco and then "fell to discoursing" of England, King James, and the French

* From Handy Street to Metacom Avenue.

against whom he seemed to feel a particular aversion. "Late it grew," states Winslow in his narrative of this journey to Pokanoket, "but victuals he offered none: for indeed he had not any; being he came so newly home, so we desired to go to rest."

Upon the following day many petty sachems came to Sowams to pay their respects to their white allies. They entertained the strangers by playing various games, the stakes being skins and knives. The Englishmen challenged them to a shooting match for skins, but they "durst not" accept the challenge. They, however, desired one of the two to shoot at a mark, "who shooting with hail shot (bird shot) they wondered to see the mark so full of holes." This "shooting at a mark" is the first instance of target practice by a white man within the limits of Rhode Island of which we have any record.

On Friday morning Winslow and Hopkins took their departure from Sowams, carrying with them some seed corn which Massasoit had given them. The sachem earnestly entreated them to prolong their stay; but the Englishmen "desired to keep the Sabbath at home," so declined the invitation. They reached Plymouth, on Saturday night, "wet, weary, and surbated," indeed, yet with the satisfaction of feeling that the object of their mission had been attained.

In March, 1623, "news came to Plymouth that Massasoit was like to die; and that, at the same time, there was a Dutch ship driven so high on the shore by stress of weather, right before his dwelling that, till the tides increased she could not be got off." Upon receipt of this intelligence Governor Bradford deemed it expedient to dispatch a second expedition to Sowams for the two-fold purpose of expressing his friendship for the Wampanoag chief and obtaining "some conference with the Dutch." Edward Winslow was again selected as the government's messenger, having for a "consort" a

certain Master John Hamden, "a gentleman of London" (supposed by some to be the famous parliamentarian of that name) and for a guide, the friendly native Hobbamock. The party followed the ancient Indian trail, and, upon nearing Mattapoiset, were informed that Massasoit was "dead and buried." Hobbamock desired the Englishmen to "return with all speed" to Plymouth, but Winslow being anxious, if the king was indeed dead, to enter into friendly relations with his successor, decided to continue the journey. At Mattapoiset, the wife of Corbitant, sachem of the Pocassets, gave the travellers "friendly entertainment," and, as no definite information regarding Massasoit's condition was obtainable, Winslow dispatched a messenger to Pokanoket to ascertain the truth. The messenger returning in a few hours, brought the welcome intelligence that the chief was still living though critically ill. "Much revived" at these tidings, Winslow and his companions "set forward with all speed" and arrived at their destination "late within night." They found Massasoit yet alive, though apparently very near his end. The Dutch ship, however, had departed "about two of the clock that afternoon," so that, as regarded one of its intents, their "journey was frustrate."

This Dutch ship probably visited Sowams for trading purposes. The fact that it grounded "right before" Massasoit's dwelling proves that the *sachimo comaco* (sachem's house) was situated on the shore of Sowams (Warren) River. Probably it stood not far from the spring still known as Massasoit's Spring. This is located at the foot of Baker Street in the compact part of Warren. In its natural state it was a powerful spring, bubbling from a bed of pure white sand. Many years ago it was excavated to the depth of about eight feet and walled up like a well. At a distance of five feet from the bottom a sluice-way was left, through which a small stream flows during the greater part of the

year and, finding its way to the surface, trickles into the river. The water, which never fails, is of excellent quality and even in warm weather remains pure and cold.

When the Englishmen entered the royal wigwam, they found a great crowd of people assembled about the bed of the chief. "There they were," narrates Winslow, "in the midst of their charms for him making such a hellish noise, as it distempered us that were well, and therefore unlike to ease him that was sick." Massasoit, whose sight was gone, greeted Winslow with these mournful words, "Oh Winslow I shall never see thee again!" Winslow answered that Governor Bradford had sent from Plymouth certain things deemed by the English good in illness and, "having a confection of many comfortable conserves etc.," on the point of his penknife, gave the sachem some, the juice of which he swallowed." Whereat those that were about him much rejoiced; saying "he had not swallowed anything in ten days before." Winslow then washed the sick man's mouth and gave him more of the confection dissolved in water and, within half an hour, this treatment "wrought a great alteration in him in the eyes of all that beheld him." His sight began to return which gave both him and his white friends "good encouragement." Winslow then hastily addressed a letter to Governor Bradford describing the "good success" of the expedition, and requesting that some chickens for broth, medicine, and other things might be sent him; and, with this letter, a messenger started for Plymouth at two o'clock in the morning.

Massasoit, having expressed a wish for some "English pottage," Winslow, though "unaccustomed and unacquainted in such business," undertook its preparation. He "caused a woman to bruise some corn" which he placed in a pipkin and, as soon as the day broke, he sallied forth with Hamden in search of herbs; and, finding nothing but strawberry leaves

gathered a handful and put them in the pot with the corn with a slice of "saxifrax root" to give the mixture a "good relish." When this gruel was sufficiently boiled, he strained it through his handkerchief and gave Massasoit "at least a pint, which he drank and liked it very well." After this the sachem's sight "mended more and more," indeed, so rapid was his improvement that, says Winslow, "we with admiration blessed God for giving His blessing to such raw and ignorant means, * * * himself and all of them acknowledging us the instruments of his preservation."

Massasoit finding himself so far recovered, now besought Winslow to visit all that were ill in the town and to give them the same treatment that had proved so beneficial in his own case, saying that his people were "good folk." Winslow acceeded to the sachem's request though it was "much offensive to him," he "not being accustomed to such poisonous savours." An entire morning was spent in going from wigwam to wigwam, and one can imagine the commingled awe and gratitude with which the simple children of nature regarded the man who, to them, must have seemed gifted with divine powers. Doubtless that wondrous season of healing was long remembered in Sowams, and doubtless the name of Winslow continued to remain a household word in the Indian village many years after its owner lay slumbering in his grave.

In the afternoon, Winslow again sallied forth, gun in hand, to gratify the desire of the king for more "pottage" of fowl. He shot an "extraordinary fat" duck and with it prepared a broth of which Massasoit, despite all warnings, "ate as much as would well have satisfied a man in health." The result of this "gross meal" was a relapse so severe that even the Englishmen doubted their patients recovery. For the space of four hours the sick man bled profusely at the nose; but, at last, the bleeding ceased and he fell into a profound

slumber from which he awakened refreshed and strengthened. Meanwhile the messenger returned from Plymouth with the chickens and other things for which Winslow had asked, but Massasoit "finding his stomach come to him," would not have the fowls killed, "but kept them for breed." These historic chickens were the first domesticated fowls ever brought into Rhode Island. So far was the sachem's health restored that the Englishmen dared not give him the medicine sent by the Plymouth surgeon. Massasoit, himself, felt assured of his recovery. "Now I see the English are my friends and love me," he exclaimed, "and whilst I live I will never forget this kindness they have showed me." These were no idle words as subsequent events proved.

During the white men's stay at Sowams many of Massasoit's friends and allies came to visit him, "some by their report from a place not less than a hundred miles." To all comers one of the sachem's chief men related the story of Massasoit's illness, "how near he was spent; how, amongst others his friends the English came to see him; and how suddenly they recovered him to this strength they saw; he being now able to sit upright by himself." But it was not by words alone that the "good folk" of Sowams showed their appreciation of the Englishmen's services to them. "Whilst we were there," writes Winslow, "our entertainment exceeded all other strangers. Divers other things were worth the noting," he adds, "but I fear I have been too tedious." Gladly would we have pardoned the worthy chronicler the most "tedious" description of that primeval entertainment which, doubtless included feasting and dancing and wild aboriginal sports. Of what inestimable value would it have been to the historian!

But it was at the moment of his guests' departure that Massasoit demonstrated the depth of his gratitude to his preservers. Calling Hobbamock, the guide, aside he, in the

presence of two or three of his most trusted counsellors, charged him to acquaint Winslow with the existence of a plot originated by the Massachusetts Indians against Weston's colony at Wessagusset and the settlement at Plymouth. Hobbamock faithfully obeyed his sachem's instructions. What would have been the fate of the Pilgrims had this timely warning not been given, we can only conjecture. Massasoit advised his white allies to "kill the men of Massachuset who were the authors of this intended mischief," and this advice they were constrained to follow.

This second visit of the English to Sowams marks an epoch in the history of both red men and white. It firmly cemented, by mutual gratitude and esteem, the friendship first established on a political basis. Previous to it, Massasoit appears to have cherished some misgivings regarding the good faith of his Christian allies. But his restoration to health by their ministrations removed every doubt from his generous mind. Witness his words, "Now I see that the English love me and are my friends, and whilst I live I will never forget this kindness they have showed me." He never did forget it.

Less than a decade after this eventful visit, an English trading house was established within the limits of Sowams of which at one period, Thomas Prince, afterwards governor of Plymouth colony, was "master." The location of this trading house has caused historians as much perplexity as the location of Sowams village itself. William J. Miller in his "History of the Wampanoag Indians" says (p. 24), "The trading post was supposed to have been located on the Barrington side of the river (Warren River) on the land known as Phebe's Neck." A little thought will convince anyone familiar with the Sowams region that the trading house would never have been placed in Barrington, for the reason that a wide, deep, and unfordable river lay between Phebe's Neck and Massasoit's town which the white men would have been

compelled to constantly cross and recross in their traffic with the Indians. Moreover, as early as 1652, an English settlement had been planted in what now constitutes the north-easterly portion of Warren on the banks of the Kickemuit River, and it seems only reasonable to suppose that the colonists placed their homes in close proximity to the trading house, which, probably, was also a fort.

Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts states in his "Journal," under the date, April 12, 1632; "The Governor received letters from Plymouth signifying that there had been a broil between their men at Sowamset and the Narragansett Indians who set upon the English house there to have taken Owsamequin* the Sagamore of Packanocott, who fled thither, with all the people, for refuge; and that Captain Standish being gone thither, to relieve the three English which were in the house, sent home in all haste for more men and other provisions, upon intelligence that Canonicus, with a great army, was coming against them; on that they wrote to our Governor for some powder, to be sent with all possible speed; for it seemed they were unfurnished. Upon this, the Governor presently despatched away the messenger with so much powder as he could carry, viz., 27 pounds. The messenger returned and brought a letter from the Governor (Bradford) signifying that the Indians were retired from Sowamsett to fight the Pequots."

The Narragansetts feared and disliked the white men. The Old Indian Chronicle states that they were jealous of Massasoit "because he had, from the first, been in high favor with the English." Naturally they would have viewed the establishment of an English trading post at Sowams with displeasure. Whether their hostility to the whites led to the "broil" at Sowams, or whether, as has been suggested,†

* Another name of Massasoit.

† Durfee, "Whatcheer."

they invaded Pokanoket for the purpose of compelling Massasoit and his warriors to assist them in repulsing the Pequots, may be only conjectured. Standish, perhaps fearing a second incursion, remained at Sowamset until some time in May.*

In course of time, the trail leading from Plymouth to Sowams became a familiar path to the people of the Pilgrim settlement. The Plymouth records show that Edward Winslow made, at least, one more visit to Pokanoket, and that John Alden, Samuel Nash, and others, also journeyed there. All who explored the Sowamset district perceived that it was, like the valley of Eshcol, "a good land," and the idea of establishing a plantation within its limits seems to have been entertained by the Plymouth government for some years before such a settlement was actually begun.

The most famous sojourner at Pokanoket, in those early days, was Roger Williams. Banished from Salem, in January, 1636, he "fled from the savage Christians of Massachusetts Bay to the Christian savages of Narragansett Bay." In "a bitter winter season," he made his way through the wild forests to seek a new home in the domains of Massasoit, the friend of white men. The best authorities believe that Massasoit gave him shelter at Sowams village until the spring broke. Williams himself, writes, "When I came (to the Narragansett) I was welcome to Ousamequin," and "I testify and declare, that, at my first coming into these parts, I obtained the lands of Seekonk of Ousamequin." If circumstantial evidence be of any value, Warren has certainly good grounds on which to base its claim to the honor of having been the first spot in Rhode Island pressed by the foot of the State's illustrious founder. It is a fact worthy of note that, one hundred and twenty-nine years after Roger Williams

* Winthrop.

sought refuge with Massasoit, Rhode Island's great educational institution (Rhode Island College, now Brown University), began its career within a few rods of the site of the royal wigwam which, presumably, sheltered the Salem exile.

On September 25, 1639, Massasoit and his eldest son, then known as Mooanam, "appeared at Court and renewed the ancient league with the Plymouth government," Massasoit "acknowledging himself a subject of the King of England." Thirteen years later, as we find by the records of the colony, an English plantation, "rated" at the value of £01:10:00, existed at Sowams. This settlement was located on the banks of the Kickemuit River in the north-easterly part of the present town of Warren. It was completely destroyed by the Indians during King Philip's war;* but, as late as Revolutionary times, the remains of its cellars and hearth stones were still visible. Its northern limit extended to what now constitutes the boundary line separating Warren from North Swansea. Its southern limits approached within less than a mile of the Indian village of the same name. At just what date the first log cabin of a white settler was erected at Sowams we have no means of ascertaining; but it is not unreasonable to suppose that the little hamlet grew up, slowly, around the old trading house.†

The Kickemuit River is a picturesque stream which, rising in Swansea, winds along the shores of Warren and Bristol and empties into Mount Hope Bay at a point called by the Indians "Weypoiset," by the English the "Narrows." On the west bank of the river, near the site of the old boundary line of Warren and Bristol, is a living spring still known as Kicke-

* Morton's Memorial, Appendix, 463.

† The late Miss Annie E. Cole, who spent many years in collecting historical data relating to Warren, believed that the trading post occupied a central location upon the west bank of the Kickemuit, near the "wading-place" before mentioned.

muit Spring.* The soil in the vicinity of this spring is mixed with oyster, clam, and quahaug shells to the depth of several feet, and from it various aboriginal implements have at different periods been exhumed. It is evident that an Indian village once occupied the locality.†

The main trail winding from Kickemuit to Sowams was intersected by shorter paths leading to various sections of Pokanoket. The Metacom Avenue of today, familiarly known as the "Back Road," is identical with the trail worn by moccasined feet in travelling to and from Mount Hope. Another trail closely following the lines of the present Kickemuit Road, School House Road, and Swansea Road, led to what is now North Swansea, and passed the "national grinding mill" of the Wampanoags,‡ a large flat rock located on the west side of the Swansea Road at a point very near the

* On the east shore of the river, a few yards below the "wading-place," could be seen less than a century ago, the remains of an Indian "hot-house," a cell-like chamber constructed of stone and built into the river bank, having in its centre, a flat bed of stone, the whole enclosure measuring about eight feet in length. The savages made use of the sweating-bath in sickness or to cleanse their skins of accumulations of dirt, paint, and grease. A huge fire was built on the rude fireplace of the "hot house," being removed after the chamber became thoroughly heated. The Indians then seated themselves around the hot stones, and remained "for an hour or more," says Roger Williams, "taking tobacco, discoursing and sweating together." After thus profusely perspiring they plunged into the water. to cool their bodies.

† The Indians accounted for the serpentine course of Kickemuit River thus. Ages ago, they said, a deluge covered the whole face of the earth. When the waters subsided, a certain divinity who inhabited Pokanoket, feeling hungry sallied forth in search of food. Espying a huge eel basking in the mud, he raised his spear aloft but the eel, perceiving his design, began wriggling rapidly in the opposite direction. As it twisted, first to the right then to the left, its pursuer was obliged to also constantly turn and turn and soon became so fatigued that the eel easily out-distanced him and finally plunged into Mount Hope Bay. The track left in the mud by pursued and pursuer eventually became the bed of the Kickemuit River.

‡ See Appendix.

line separating Massachusetts and Rhode Island. There were other paths leading to Birch Swamp in the northeasterly part of Warren, to Poppasquash (the name then applied to the westerly part of Bristol), and to a ferry over Sowams River by means of which connection was made between Massasoit's town and Chachacust, (a neck of land in what is now Barrington). The two last mentioned trails are identical with North and South Main Streets in Warren.

From the "wading-place" a trail ran eastward a short distance and then branched off towards Touiset, Mattapoisett, and other localities. A careful study of the early records of Swansea and Warren has convinced the writer that, in laying out highways, the original settlers of the towns, in many instances, merely widened the ancient trails used by the Wampanoags for no one knows how many centuries prior to the arrival of the Mayflower in Cape Cod Bay.

The Plymouth government having established a settlement at Sowams, "the garden of their patent,*" granted "certain worthy gentlemen" of the colony leave to purchase land in the Sowamset district. Negotiations were immediately entered into with the Wampanoag chief, which resulted in the sale of "Sowams and Parts Adjacent" by Massasoit and his oldest son Wamsutta (Mooanam or Alexander), in March, 1653. The purchasers of these "Sawomes Lands," which included the greater part of Pokanoket were Thomas Prince, Thomas Willett, Miles Standish, Josiah Winslow, William Bradford, Thomas Clark, John Winslow, Thomas Cushman, William White,† John Adams and Experience Mitchell. The price paid was thirty-five pounds sterling, and the reader scarcely needs to be told that the Englishmen "got the best of the bargain." Why Massasoit consented

* Callender's Historical Discourse.

† William White died, 1621. The actual purchasers were his two sons, Resolved and Peregrine.

to "sell his birthright," is a question more easily asked than answered; gratitude probably influenced him, in part. He never forgot that he owed his life to his English allies. Possibly, too, the wise statesman, realizing the superiority of the white man's civilization, believed his people would be benefitted by closer relationship with them. He is said to have warned his sons that if they ever engaged in war against the English they would meet with defeat.

The Sowams proprietors did not immediately enter into possession of their entire purchase. By a clause in the "Grand Deed of Saile," they were restrained from occupying "the neck" (*i. e.* Mount Hope Neck*) until such time as the Indians should remove therefrom, the term "neck" as used, however, really signifying only the "uplands," or central portion of what now constitutes Warren and Bristol. The meadows (*i. e.* marshes) on either side the "great river," (Sowams River), Kickemuit River, and in and about Poppasquash and Chachacust were the only portions of the territory which actually passed into their hands at the date of sale. These they at once proceeded to divide. The boundaries of the several "lots" are plainly described in the "Records of Sowams and Parts Adjacent" and may be easily traced on a map of Bristol County, R. I. The lots apportioned within the limits of Indian and English Sowams fell to the share of Captain Miles Standish, Experience Mitchell, Resolved and Peregrine White, Thomas Willett, John Adams, Thomas Prince, and John and Josiah Winslow.

The lot of Captain Standish included the marshes on both sides of Kickemuit River from the source of the stream to "the passage where they have usually gone over with canoes"

* The English gave the name of Mt. Hope Neck to the peninsula formed by Sowams River and Narragansett Bay on the west and Kickemuit River and Mt. Hope Bay on the east. It is a tract nine miles in extent, of which one mile is in North Swansea, three miles are in Warren and the remaining five miles, including the hill from which the neck is named are in Bristol.

i. e. the "wading-place." Standish also had land on the east bank of the river from the wading-place to a "certain creek" running towards the upland. His next neighbor on the south was Experience Mitchell whose "meadow" extended from the creek before mentioned to "Clark's Creek." Beyond Mitchell's land that of John Adams stretched from "Clark's Creek" to "Rocky Run;" while, still farther south, the lot of Resolved White ran from "Rocky Run" to "Weypoisett," the "narrows" of the river. Resolved White also possessed a strip of marsh on the west bank of the stream which began at the "passage with canoes" and ended at a "broaken red oak tree" whose location no man now knoweth.

The northern boundary of Captain Thomas Willett's lot was marked by this same "broaken oak tree" and its southern boundary line was very near the "narrows." In addition to this land Willet had a strip of marsh on the east bank of Sowams River. South of this strip was the lot of John Winslow, and south of Winslow's meadow was a tract of land belonging to Peregrine and Resolved White. Willett's meadow was apparently bounded by Massasoit's village on the north, the marshes of which were not divided, undoubtedly having been reserved by Massasoit for the use of his people.

The land on the east shore of Belcher's Cove, an arm of Sowams River, fell to the share of Thomas Prince. On the west side of the Cove the meadows "to the head thereof" were laid out to Josias Winslow and the Whites. The Sowams Purchase" was a speculation, and the original proprietors did not long retain their land. That they were no losers by their investment is proved by the fact that Peregrine White sold his share for £40 pounds, five pounds more than was paid the Wampanoags for the entire territory bought.

From 1652 until the death of Massasoit in 1660, peace between the white men at English Sowams and the red men

at Indian Sowams remained uninterrupted. The civilized farmer and the savage warrior appear to have each dwelt quietly under the shadow of his "own vine and fig tree" Doubtless the inhabitants of Massasoit's town were more or less affected by every day intercourse with their white neighbors. They must have learned many things unknown to the savages of districts remote from English settlements. Firm as was his friendship for the white men, however, Massasoit, Hubbard states, "was never in the least degree well affected to the religion of the English" and would fain have forced them to promise "never to attempt to draw away any of his people from their old pagan superstition and devilish idolatry." He lived and died a heathen, clinging pertinaciously to the faith and gods of his fathers.

In 1658 the Plymouth government voted to raise a troop of horse "out of the several townships to bee reddy for service when required." Each horse was to be "well appointed with furniture, viz.; a saddle and a case of petternells." * Sowamsett contributed one trooper to this company.

For several years prior to the death of Massasoit, Wamsutta, or Alexander, was associated with his father in the government of the Wampanoags, and when the great chief's spirit fled from earth to *Sowaniu*, the paradise of the red man, became the sachem of the tribe. He does not appear to have made his father's town his own headquarters, but to have resided at Mount Hope. Probably his village stood near, or upon, the site of that occupied at a later date by his brother Philip. Philip's town was not located as many writers have erroneouly stated, upon the mount, itself, but at a point about a mile and a half north of it and near the "narrows" of Kickemuit River. At and about this spot, relics of the aborigines have been disinterred in considerable

* "Petronel, a kind of carabine or horseman's pistol." Webster.

numbers, and the remains of an ancient Indian burial ground was discovered there several years ago.

Soon after the death of his father Wamsutta repaired to Plymouth and "professing great respect," desired the Court to bestow English names upon himself and his younger brother. The Court acceded to the request and named the sachem "Allexander Pokanoket," his brother (Metacom) Philip, presumably after Alexander the Great and Philip of Macedon. For a brief period succeeding this event, the old time friendship of Wampanoag, and Englishman remained apparently undisturbed.

In 1660 the "rates" of Sowams were increased to £02:10:00. The little hamlet was slowly gaining in population and importance. During this year, the Court ordered a pound erected at Kickemuit, as Wamsutta complained that corn belonging to his people had been injured by swine, the property of the English. In June, 1661, Sowamsett and "all the naighbors there inhabiting" were placed under the "ward" of Rehoboth, and it was decreed that twenty shillings of Sowams' rates should "be allowed for the easing of Sandwich rates."

Alexander's good faith began to be questioned by the English early in 1662. The governor of Plymouth colony having been informed that the sachem was endeavoring to persuade the old-time enemies of the Wampanoags, the Narragansetts, to join him in a revolt against the whites, deputed Captain Thomas Willett to investigate the truth of the report. Upon visiting Mt. Hope, Captain Willett was assured by Alexander that the Narragansetts had fabricated the story in order to injure the Wampanoags in the eyes of the English. The chief agreed to attend the next session of the Court at Plymouth that the charges against him might be fully investigated; yet when the Court convened he failed to appear being, it was said, at that very date upon a visit

to the Narragansett country. The government decided to deal peremptorily with him and, accordingly, Josias Winslow, then Major Commandant of the Colonial militia, was depatched to bring him to Plymouth by force. Winslow and his party came upon the sachem, suddenly, at a hunting lodge near Munponset Pond in the present town of Halifax, Mass.; and, when Alexander declined to accede to the Court's demand, Winslow presented a loaded pistol at his breast threatening him with instant death if he persisted in his refusal. Alexander and followers were almost helpless, their guns which had been stacked outside the lodge having been seized by the English before entering, and consequently, after a parley, and at the earnest entreaty of his people, the sachem yielded to the inevitable and, accompanied by his wife and a long train of warriors and squaws began the march towards Plymouth. Upon reaching Duxbury he was entertained at Major Winslow's house, pending the arrival of orders from Governor Prince who resided at Eastham. But the haughty spirit of the Wampanoag king could ill brook the humiliation of arrest and imprisonment, and Alexander was soon smitten with a raging fever induced by grief and anger. The best medical skill was summoned to attend him, but he sank rapidly, and his terrified followers, believing him poisoned by the English, entreated to be allowed to carry him to Mt. Hope, promising to return with him as soon as he should recover and offering to send his son* as a hostage. Their request was granted and with all possible speed they started on the homeward journey. They bore their chief on a litter until they reached Titicut where they embarked in canoes, but had proceeded only a short distance down the river ere they perceived that he was dying. They immediately drew their frail barks to the shore, lifted him

* The name of Alexander's son is unknown.

from the canoe, and tenderly placed him upon the grass. In stoical silence they awaited the end; and, when, the last fluttering sigh had escaped the pallid lips, they replaced the form of the dead sachem in the canoe, grasped their paddles and, with hearts burning with grief, anger, and thirst for revenge, pushed swiftly and silently down the stream.

The tragic death of Alexander,—the direct result of the bold and perhaps unwise policy of the Plymouth government—broke the first link in the chain of friendship that had bound Wampanoag and Englishman together. The sullen attitude of the savages awakened anxiety among the colonists, and it was with some alarm that those dwelling at the Sowams' settlement beheld a vast concourse of savages gathered at Mt. Hope to mourn for the dead chief and to celebrate his brother Philip's accession to the sachemship. But the feared outbreak of hostilities did not occur. Whatever Philip's real feelings were, he apparently desired to live in amity with the English; and a few months after becoming the head of his tribe renewed the "covenant" which Massasoit had made with the government of Plymouth. He does not seem to have, at first, felt a prejudice against the Christian religion for, in the winter of 1663–4, he and his people sent to John Eliot for "books to learn to read and to pray unto God." Eliot's son twice visited Pokanoket and taught among the Wampanoags, and from a letter addressed by Eliot to the United Colonies in 1664, it appears probable that the apostle, himself, labored at Mt. Hope in 1664-5.

The hamlet by the Kickemuit continued under the ward of Rehoboth during 1663 and 1664, being ordered to so remain until such time as the "naighborhood" should be in a capassitie and desire to be a township of themselves." In 1664 Sowams was rated at £2:05:00; in 1666 at £07:17:06; in 1667, at £10:10:00. During this same year, "Wannamoi-

sett* and Parts Adjacent" were incorporated as a township under the name of Swansea. The charter granted it described the township as "all such lands that lyeth betwixt the salt water Bay and coming up Taunton River all the land between the salt water and river and the bounds of Taunton and Rehoboth." It will readily be seen that the site of Warren was included within the bounds of this extensive territory. The history of Sowams thus became merged in that of Swansea, less than a score of years after its commencement, and from the annals of Swansea the chronicler must glean the facts that make up its final chapters.

It is not within the province of this sketch to discuss at length the causes which led to that mighty struggle between savagery and civilization known is history as King Philip's War. For some years after he became sachem, Philip maintained an outward show of fealty to the English. But as time went on the relations of red men and white became strained. The Indian saw the forests rapidly vanishing beneath the colonist's axe, and realized that the game on which he depended for sustenance would, also, soon disappear. He was forced to sell his lands for the necessities of life, and he complained bitterly, and too often with reason, of wrongs inflicted upon him by his white brother. Moreover, he was fast becoming debased by the vices of civilization. Philip was a statesman and a patriot. He loved his country and his people. In the increasing power of the English he saw presaged the downfall of his race. He resolved to attempt the extermination of the usurpers. His fertile brain evolved a scheme for a union of the various native tribes against the common foe. The English suspected his designs, yet he many times adroitly baffled their watchfulness. The fates, however, were against him, and he was destined never to work out the salvation of his people.

* See Appendix.

In 1675, John Sassamon, a Christian Indian employed as a sort of private secretary by Philip, warned the Plymouth government that his master was plotting against it. Philip discovered the perfidy of Sassamon, and shortly afterward, the dead body of the latter was found beneath the ice in Assawamset Pond in Middleborough. The English doubted not that Sassamon had been put to death by the sachem's order. They arrested three savages whom they charged with the murder, tried them before a jury composed of twelve Englishmen and four Indians, and sentenced them to death, though two of them maintained their innocence to the last. Philip had been summoned to Plymouth to testify regarding his own connection with the murder, but he was too wise to obey an injunction, so fraught with peril. Instead, he openly hurled defiance at his accusers.

His first overt act was committed within the limits of Sowams. "A little before the Court," the Plymouth Records tell us, "Philip began to keep his men in armes about him and to gather strangers unto him and to march about in armes toward the vper end of the Necke on which he lived and neare to the English houses whoe began thereby to be somewhat disquieted but tooke as yett noe further notice but only to sett a military watch in the next Townes as Swanzey and Rehoboth." The Indians, however did not long confine themselves to stalking about and flourishing their weapons. Their powwows, or priests, having prophesied defeat to which ever party should shed the first blood in the conflict, they sought to provoke the English to attack them by shooting their cattle, frightening women, and insulting travellers. On the 18th or 19th of June, Job Winslow's house * was "broken up and rifled" by them. On Sunday,

* After the close of Philip's war, Job Winslow erected a "dwelling house" near the "wading-place" at Kickemuit on what is now the farm of Mr. Edward Ennis. It is probable that the house "broken up" by the Indians occupied this same site.

June 20th, a party of eight warriors fully armed, invaded the hamlet. They knocked at the door of a colonist and demanded permission to grind their hatchets. Upon being told that the grinding of hatchets on the Lord's Day was a sin they replied, "We know not who your God is and we shall grind our hatchets for all you or your God either." They then proceeded to another house where they helped themselves liberally to food. Continuing along the road they met an Englishman whom they took prisoner, but later dismissed, after enjoining him not to work on the Lord's Day and to tell no lies.

As they proceeded on they began to shoot the cattle in the fields, encountering no resistance as nearly all the settlers were in attendance at public worship. At length they reached a house whose owner was not at church. They killed his cattle, then entered the house and demanded liquor, which being refused they attempted to seize by violence. The Englishman infuriated, snatched up his gun and fired, seriously injuring one of the savages. The Indians immediately retired, bearing the wounded warrior with them, and breathing threats of vengeance. Back through Sowams they swiftly wended their way to their own territory. Tradition says that at Kickemuit Spring they met Philip, who wept when he heard their story, and there seems little reason to doubt the truth of the tradition. Though he had long meditated war, the sachem was not yet fully prepared for it. Events unforeseen had, however, hastened the crisis. He found it impossible to curb the impatience and fury of his younger warriors, and though he had failed to complete his cherished scheme for a general uprising of the red men, he could no longer delay open battle with the enemy. Perhaps a prophetic foreboding of defeat forced the tears from his eyes.

The raid upon Sowams was the beginning of a reign of terror that extended over every portion of Swansea. The

Plymouth government, upon being notified of the condition of affairs, immediately dispatched companies of militia to the assistance of the distressed township. On June 22d, six men were killed or mortally wounded at Mattapoiset. Thursday, June 24th, was appointed a day of fasting and prayer, and as some of the colonists were returning from church they were fired upon by the Indians with the result that one man was killed and another wounded. During the same day "six men were killed in another part of the town." On the 28th, William Hammond was killed and "one Corporal Belcher" wounded while scouring the "enemy's territory" between Miles' garrison * at North Swansea and the Sowams' settlement. On the 29th, a party of Indians who had shown themselves near the garrison were pursued by the English towards Sowams but made their escape into a nearby swamp.† That night Philip, fearful of capture, abandoned Mt. Hope Neck retreating across the bay to Pocasset, now Tiverton. One of the last acts performed by the savages ere quitting the home of their ancestors, was the final destruction of Sowams. Hubbard tells us that on the following day the entire English force (which had concentrated at North Swansea) marched from Miles' garrison towards Mt. Hope. At a point about a mile and a half below the bridge near the garrison they "passed by some houses newly burned" and "not far off one of them they found a Bible newly torn and the leaves scattered about by the enemy." These charred ruins and torn and scattered leaves were all that remained of English Sowams, ill-fated Sowams, strangely destined to be destroyed by the same hands that had nurtured it in its infancy. Two or three miles further on, at the "Narrow of the Neck" on the west

* This was located in what is now Barneysville. The bridge over Palmer's River near its site is still generally called "Miles' Bridge"

† Birch Swamp in the north-easterly part of Warren.

bank of Kickemuit River the soldiers discovered the "heads, hands, and scalps" of eight Englishmen, murdered at Mattapoisett, "stuck up on poles near the highway," close by the spot which must have been pressed by the feet of Winslow and Hopkins when, journeying from Plymouth to Pokanoket in 1621, they crossed the "wading-place" at Kickemuit and entered Sowams for the purpose of continuing the "league of peace and friendship" with Massasoit, and of securing from the savage chief the supply of seed corn which the feeble colony of Plymouth then stood sorely in need of.

The site of English Sowams remained desolate from that eventful June day until some time after the close of the war which soon followed the death of King Philip in August, 1676. About 1678, settlers began to rebuild along the Kickemuit, and the old "ways" and "bridal paths" laid out "long since" by the Sowams' colonists were re-surveyed, descriptions of them being carefully recorded. Most of these ancient highways are in use at the present day. There being no Indians left on Mount Hope Neck, the territory now occupied by the town of Bristol and the compact part of Warren, passed into the possession of the successors of the original Sowams' proprietors, by virtue of the deed executed by Massasoit and Wamsutta in 1653. By an arbitrary act, King Charles transferred the site of Bristol to Plymouth, but that of Warren became a part of Swansea. As early as 1671, the last mentioned district was known by the name of "Brooks' Pasture," undoubtedly from some right of ownership in it possessed by Timothy Brooks.* What that right was the writer has been, thus far, unable to discover, though a careful and diligent search of the early records has been made in the hope of solving the mystery. At different periods, between 1681 and 1725, Brooks' Pasture—with the exception of the meadows or marshes divided in 1653 between Thomas Prince

* See Appendix.

and his partners in the Sowams' purchase—was laid out and divided among the proprietors there being, in all, eight several apportionments of land made.

It is uncertain at what date the first dwelling house was erected in the western part of Brooks' Pasture. In 1746, that section of Swansea now occupied by the two towns of Barrington and Warren was ceded to Rhode Island, incorporated as a township, and given the name of Warren in honor of Admiral Sir Peter Warren, the hero of Louisburg and Cape Breton. Warren's proximity to the ocean, and its excellent harbor facilities, early led the inhabitants to engage in maritime pursuits; and, in course of time, the wharves, and shops, ship yards and dwelling houses of a flourishing seaport sprang up to replace the vanished wigwams of Massasoit's town, Sowams in Pokanoket.

Appendix

Some Notes on the Family of Massasoit

Massasoit had two brothers, Quadequina and Akkompoin. When Massasoit visited Plymouth, March 22, 1621, he was accompanied by Quadequina who is described as a "very proper, tall young man, of a very modest and seemly countenance." It is supposed that Massasoit took the name of Ousamequin upon the death of Quadequina.

Akkompoin, Uncompawen, or Woonkaponehunt, was one of King Philip's counsellors. He signed the treaties made by Philip with the English at Plymouth, August 6, 1662; at Taunton, April 10, 1671; and at Plymouth, September 29, 1671. He was killed by the English, while attempting to cross Taunton river, July 31, 1676.

Namumpum, *alias* Tatapanum, *alias* Weetamoe, the wife of Mooanum, *alias* Wamsutta, *alias* Alexander, *alias* Sopaquitt, Massasoit's eldest son, is known in history as the "Squaw Sachem of Pocasset." She is supposed to have been the daughter of Corbitant of Mattapoiset. At the time of her marriage to Alexander she was the widow of an Indian named Weequequinequa. Soon after the death of Alexander she wedded a third husband Quiquequanchett, of whom nothing definite is known. She married, fourth, Petownonowit, who espoused the English cause during Philip's War, in consequence of which his wife separated from him and formed an alliance with Quinnapin, a young Narragansett sachem, and one of Philip's chief captains. Weetamoe followed the fortunes of Philip throughout the war. She was drowned in Taunton River, near Mattapoisett, August, 1676. Alexander had a son, but of his history nothing seems to be known.

Metacomet *alias* Pometacom, *alias* King Philip, *alias* Wewascowanett, Massasoit's second son, married Wootonekanuske, a sister of Weetamoe. They had two children, one of whom died in 1671. The other, a boy of eight, was, with his mother, captured by the English, August 1, 1676, and, after the death of Philip, both mother and son were shipped to the West Indies and sold into slavery. Of their subsequent fate there is no record.

Sunconewhew was the third son of Massasoit. His name appears upon a deed given by Philip, March 30, 1668, confirming the sale of the town of Rehoboth made by Massasoit in 1641. It is said that King Philip had a brother killed, July 18, 1675, who was a great captain and had been educated at Harvard College. This was probably Sunconewhew.

Massasoit had a daughter Amie. She married Watuspaquin, or Tuspaquin, chief of the Assawamset Indians, generally called by the English the "Black Sachem." She is probably the "sister of Philip" who was captured by the English, July 31, 1676. Her husband was put to death by the Plymouth authorities in September, 1676. Descendants of Tuspaquin and Amie are living, the last of the royal race of Massasoit. For an authentic and interesting account of them the reader is referred to "Indian History, Biography and Geneology" by Ebenezer W. Pierce of Freetown, Mass. published, 1878, by Zerviah Gould Mitchell, sixth in line of descent from Tuspaquin and Amie, his wife.

Historic Localities in and About Sowams

Touiset. Indian name of a neck of land lying between Kickemuit and Cole's Rivers. The western portion of it is in Warren, the eastern in Swansea. Indian relics have been exhumed from its soil, and, perhaps an Indian village was once located upon it. April 10, 1673, Tottomommuck,

sachem of Seaconnet (Little Compton, R. I.), sold "land in Swansea called Towsett," * to Nathaniel Paine. In the early records of Swansea Touiset is generally termed "The Sheep Pasture." It was laid out in 106 lots which were divided among the Swansea proprietors in 1686. In July 1675, a great concourse of Philip's warriors gathered at Touiset, near the "narrows" of the Kickemuit River, "to eat clams, other provisions being scarce." Captain Benjamin Church, then at Pocasset (Tiverton), greatly desired to surprise and capture this body of the enemy; but, as he had peremptory orders to proceed from Pocasset directly to Mt. Hope, he was compelled to allow them to remain unmolested.

After the close of Philip's war, the remnant of the Wampanoags fled to Maine, and ultimately became merged in the Penobscot tribe. Up to half a century ago, parties of Penobscot Indians were in the habit of making periodical visits to Warren, camping for several days in various parts of the town. Before returning to Maine, they invariably paid a visit of a few hours to what is known as the "Hicks' Farm" on Touiset Neck, though for what purpose this particular locality was visited they never divulged.

King's Rocks, the "National Grinding Mill" of the Wampanoags. The following article, contributed by Gen. Guy M. Fessenden, appeared in the "Warren Telegraph" issue of June 2, 1860.

"Mr. Editor: An interesting discovery in reference to the aboriginal history of this town has recently been made. Mr. Francis Loring, an intelligent Indian, and a member of the Penobscot tribe, who has been in this vicinity for several weeks, informed the writer that the tribe had in their possession, and which they carefully preserved among their national archives, an ancient book made of skins, containing many descriptions of important historical localities, some of which

* Taunton Records.

are in this vicinity, all of them in the ancient Indian style of signs and picture writing. One of these pictures represents four men rolling a heavy circular stone, by a stick placed through a hole in the centre, back and forth over a quantity of corn, and described as the Wampanoag national grinding mill, where corn was ground for war parties or for any large public gathering of the people.

"The locality of the place was so plainly stated that Mr. Loring had no difficulty in finding it. It is at the place called King's Rocks" in Warren, near the Swansea line about two miles from the village. On the west side of the mass of rocks is a nearly level smooth surface of rock about twenty-five feet by eight feet in width. In this level place are three regular, narrow, straight depressions. They appear evidently to have been worn into the rock by some forcible attrition, and are, in fact, just such hollows as might be made by the cause assigned.

"These worn places have heretofore attracted notice and speculation, but the true cause of their existence has not before been known by late generations, and the idea of a national grinding mill, or of pulverizing corn by a rolling stone in connection with Indian history will probably be new to every one.

"As confirmatory of the locality, Mr. Loring says the picture has upon it another hill of somewhat peculiar appearance (a large rock upon the summit) situated about a mile east of the grinding place, named, he thinks Wigwam Hill.* Leading from this hill towards the setting sun are two hundred and forty human steps, the line of steps terminating in three skulls which denotes a burial place. Mr. Loring visited the hill (now called Margaret's Hill from the last Indian woman who resided there) and pacing off 240 steps

* This hill is on the farm of Mr. Edward Mason, Birch Swamp Road, Warren.

west came to an Indian cemetery, which he verified by digging, and finding human remains.

F"

Mr. Francis Loring, known also by the name "Big Thunder" is now living, at an advanced age, on Indian Old Town Island, Maine, and is the custodian of the Penobscot tribe. The writer recently learned from him that the "ancient book made of skins" alluded to by General Fessenden was, a few years ago, accidentally destroyed by fire.

The Penobscot language contains several words which are undoubtedly of Wampanoag or Narragansett origin. This tribe regard Warren, R. I., as the former home of Massasoit. They translate the word Sowams, "Place of the Setting Sun."

Wannamoisett. The northern part of Barrington extending into Seekonk, and including Bullock's Point and Riverside. It was purchased of the Indians by John Brown, 1645. Became a part of Swansea, 1668.

Chachacust. The neck of land lying between Barrington and Warren, or Palmer's Rivers. Called by the English, New Meadow Neck, or the New Meadows. Under the date December 7, 1647, the "New Meadows" are referred to, in the Plymouth Records, as being "on the west side of Sowams River" which proves that Sowams River and Warren River are identical. King Philip claimed that a portion of Chachacust was not included in the sale of "Sowams and Parts Adjacent," and the English purchased his right in 1668.

Popanomscut. The southerly section of Barrington. It was called by the English "Phebe's Neck," and appears to have been the abode of Pebee, or Thebe, a petty Wampanoag sachem, and one of Philip's counsellors. Thebe was killed by the English July 2, 1675. At the close of Philip's war Plymouth Colony claimed Popanomscut as "conquered land," but the Sowams' proprietors succeeded in establishing their right to the tract under the provisions of the "Grand Deed of Saile" of "Sowams and Parts Adjacent."

In Roger Williams' "Key" occurs the word "paponaumsuog" which is thus defined: "A winter fish which comes up in the brooks and rivulets; some call them frost fish from their coming up from the sea into fresh brooks in time of frost and snow." Every one familar with Warren River is aware of the fact that, with the arrival of cold weather, great quantities of frost fish appear in its waters, swarming close to both the Barrington and Warren shores. The similarity of the two words "Popanomscut" and "paponaumsuog" suggests the question: May not the former word have been derived from the latter, and may not its meaning be "place of frost fish" or something of similar signification?

Popanomscut was laid out and divided among the proprietors between 1676 and 1680.

Chachapacaset. Rumstick Neck in Barrington. The name Rumstick was applied to the neck in 1697, and at first only to a locality as "Rumstick on Chachapacaset." Some authorities believe the word Rumstick to be of Norse origin.

Nayatt. The south-west point of Barrington.

Moscachuck Creek. It runs from the brickyard at Nayatt into Narragansett Bay.

Annawomscott. That section of Barrington now known as Drownville.

Scamscammuck Spring. Located at the upper end of Chachapacasset.

Mosskituash Creek. This flows into Bullock's Cove at Riverside.

Poppasquash Neck. Poppasquash, though originally used to indicate the entire western part of Bristol, is now only applied to a small peninsula surrounded by the waters of Bristol harbor on the east and Narragansett Bay on the west.

The "Miery Swamp." The swamp at Mount Hope where King Philip was slain August 12, 1676.

"King Philip's Chair." A niche in the eastern side of Mount Hope in which, according to tradition, King Philip was accustomed to sit for the purpose of reviewing his warriors, practicing target shooting, etc. Near the "chair" is a spring of pure water.

The Grand Deed of Saile of Lands from Osamequin and Wamsetto his son, dated 29th March, 1653.

To All People to whome these presents shall come, Osamaquin and Wamsetto his Eldest Sone Sendeth greeting. Know Yee, that wee the said Osamequin & Wamsetto, for & in consideration of thirty-five pounds sterling to us the said Osamequin and Wamsetto in hand payd By Thomas Prince Gent: Thomas Willett Gent: Miles Standish, Gent: Josiah Winslow, Gent: for And in the behalfe of themselues and divers others of the Inhabitants of Plimouth Jurisdiction, whose names are hereafter specified, with which said summe we the said Osamequin and Wamsetto doe Acknowledge ourselues fully satisfyed contented and payd, Haue freely and absolutely bargained and Sold Enfeoffed and Confirmed and by these presents Doe Bargaine Sell Enfeoffe and Confirme from us the said Osamequin and Wamsetto, and our and Every of our haiers unto Thomas Prince, Thomas Willett, Miles Standish, Josia Winslow, Agents for themselves and William Bradford, Senr, Gent: Thomas Clark, John Winslow, Thomas Cushman, William White, John Adams and Experience Mitchell, to them and Every of them, their and Every of their haiers and assigns forever;—

All those Severall parcells and Necks of Vpland, Swamps and Meadows Lyeing and being on the South Syde of Sinkunch Els Rehoboth, Bounds and and is bounded from a Little Brooke of water, called by the Indjans Mosskituash Westerly, and so Ranging by a dead Swamp, Estward, and so by markt trees as Osamequin and Wamsetto directed unto the great River with all the Meadow in and about ye Sydes of bothe the

Branches of the great River wth all the Creeks and Brookes that are in or upon any of the said meadows, as also all the marsh meadow Lying and Being wth out the Bounds before mentioned in or about the neck Called by the Indians Chachacust, Also all the meadow of any kind Lying and being in or about Popasquash neck as also all the meadow Lyeing from Kickomuet on both sides or any way Joyning to it on the bay on Each Side.

To Haue And To Hold all the aforesaid vpland Swamp Marshes Creeks and Rivers withe all their appurtinances unto the aforesaid Thomas Prince, Thomas Willett, Miles Standish, Josia Winslow and the rest of the partners aforesaid to theme, And Every of them their and Every of their haiers Executors And assignes for Ever And the said Osamequin and Wamsetto his Sone Covenant promise and grant, that whensoeuer the Indians Shall Remoue from the Neck that then and from thence forth the aforesaid Thomas Prince, Thomas Willet, Miles Standish, Josiah Winslow shall enter vpon the Same by the Same Agreement as their Proper Rights And Interests to them and their heirs for Ever. To and for the true perforemance of all and Every one of the aforesaid severall Perticulars wee the said Osamequin, and Wamsetto Bind us and every of us our and every of our heirs Executors Administrators and Assignes ffirmly by these presents.

In Witness whereof wee haue hereunto sett our hands and Seales this twentieth day of March, anno Domini, 1653.

The marke of

Osamequin, & a (Seale).

Wamsetto, W. & (Seale).

Signed Sealed and Delivered
in ye Presence of us
John Browne
James Browne
Richard Garrett.

Timothy Brooks

Timothy Brooks was the son of Henry and Susan Brooks of Woburn, Mass. He married (1st), 1659, December 2, Mary, daughter of John Russell. She died at Woburn, 1680. He married (2d), 1680, Mehitable, daughter of Roger and Mary Mowry, and widow of Eldad Kingsley of Swansea. Timothy Brooks had several children of some of whom we find record as follows:

Timothy, born, 1661, October 9. Married, 1685, November 10, Hannah, daughter of Obadiah and Abigail (Bullock) Bowen. He was a Baptist minister. Removed from Swansea, Mass., to Cohansey, N. Y.

John, born about 1662. Married (1st) Martha, daughter of Hugh and Mary (Foxwell) Cole (b. 1662, April 16; d. 1711); married (2d) Tabitha Wright of New York. She died, 1714, November 19, aged 30 years. He died, 1714, November 22, aged 52 years.

Mary, married Samuel, son of William and Susannah Salisbury (b. 1666, May 17), and died ——). Samuel Salisbury married (2d) Jemima Martin.

Elizabeth, married, 1689, April 10, Thomas Lewis.

Hepsibath, born, 1673. Married, 1694, May 22. Pelatiah, son of Sampson and Mary (Butterworth) Mason, (b. 1669, April 1), and died, 1727, August 24. He married a second, third, and fourth wife and died, 1763, March 29.

Rebecca, married, 1696, November 6, Melatiah, son of John and Joanna (Esten) Martin. He was born, 1673, April 30, and died, 1761, January 30.

Abigail, married Levi Preston.

Josiah born, Swansea, Mass., 1681. Removed to New York.

Timothy Brooks resided at different periods, at Woburn, Bedford and Swansea, Mass. During King Philip's war, his family were protected at "Garrison No. 10" at Bedford,

which stood near his residence, now known as the "Old Page House." After the death of his first wife, 1680, he removed to Swansea. He was "admitted into ye second Ranke" at Swansea 1680, November 12. Freeman, 1681. Granted liberty "to set up a Saw Mill on Mattapoisett River at the upper falls and four acres of Land to accommodate the same adjoining," 1681, November 11. One of "the Grand Enquest," 1682, June 6. Granted liberty to "keep Entertainment for Travellers" 1684, January 1. Commissioned Lieutenant of the Swansea Company, 1686, June 4. Promoted to be Captain of the Company, 1690, May 20.

Timothy Brooks resided in that part of Swansea now Warren, and, in 1690, was one of the fence viewers appointed for Kickemuit district. His hostelry was the first ever opened within the limits of Warren. Judging by deeds recorded at Swansea and Warren, it was located on the east side of Belcher's Cove on the Swansea Road. His estate consisted of a house, barn, and out-buildings and 110 acres of land, which he sold to John Barney of Bristol, May 15, 1702.

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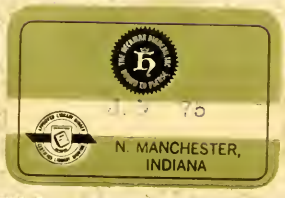
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